

# [***Russia s Posting More To TikTok And Seeing Greater Engagement With Its Posts, Report Says***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY2-H5T1-DXVP-51X9-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** James Farrell, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** TikTok could be becoming more of a focus for Russian influence operations as state-affiliated accounts are finding more engagement.

**Body**

**Topline**

As U.S. lawmakers pressure Chinese-affiliated social media platform TikTok to find an American owner amid concern it could become a hub for Chinese propaganda, anew reportfrom the Brookings Institution suggests Russia may be increasingly seeking to use the platform to push state-sponsored messaging.

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FILE - The TikTok logo is displayed on a mobile phone in front of a computer screen, Oct. 14, 2022, in Boston. TikTok is gearing up for a legal fight against a U.S. law that would force the social media platform to break ties with its China-based parent company or face a ban. A battle in the courts will almost certainly be backed by Chinese authorities as the bitter U.S.-China rivalry threatens the future of a wildly popular way for young Americans to connect online. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File)

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</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

Since 2022, the number of Russian state-affiliated accounts, many of which are labeled by TikTok as state-controlled media accounts, that posted on TikTok at least once has dipped from 57 in 2022 to 46 so far this year, according to the Brookings Institution, but the frequency of posts has risen.

In 2022, only one account was posting on average twice per day, but so far this year three accounts are posting at least 10 posts per day on average, and Russian-affiliated accounts are generally posting between four and five times per day compared to two or three times per day last year, according to the report.

Russian-affiliated accounts are still more active on other platforms like X, formerly Twitter, but TikTok has been more successful at driving engagement on Russia-backed content all but six of the top 50 most engaging posts from Russian-sponsored accounts across all platforms so far in 2024 were made on TikTok, the Brookings report found.

Overall engagement on Russian-backed TikTok posts has jumped significantly since 2022, from three million engagements per day in 2022 to 13 million engagements per day so far in 2024 though the report cautions that this overall jump reflects a higher volume of posts as opposed to more engagement per post.

Russian-affiliated TikTok content is also more likely to focus on U.S. political content compared to posts made on other platforms with posts focused on Tucker Carlson s praise for Russia during hisinterviewwith Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this year and posts poking fun at President Joe Biden sage.

Still, U.S.-focused content accounts for only a small portion 3% of Russian state media s overall social media messaging, with many posts focusing on Russia s war in Ukraine, NATO and more.

**Contra**

In a statement to Forbes, TikTok said it clearly labels state-controlled media accounts and plans to expand its policy on those accounts in the coming weeks to further address accounts that attempt to reach communities outside their home country on current global events and affairs. The company argues it has a strong record of removing covert influence operations and eliminating their accounts and has removed 13 networks operating from Russia.

**What To Watch For**

The trends show a clear shift in Russia s overt strategies for pushing its preferred messages into the public sphere, recognizing TikTok as a potential driver for engagement. This may complement similar shifts in its covert information operations tosecretly amplify its preferred messaging, the report notes.

**Key Background**

The report comes as other observers have noted an uptick in Russian efforts to influence U.S. ***politics*** ahead of the 2024 election. A recent report from theMicrosoft Threat Analysis Center, for instance, found that Russian influence operations have shown new signs of activity in recent months, suggesting a ramp up to the heart of election season. But the Brookings Institution s study on TikTok comes as U.S. lawmakers have passedlegislationthreatening to ban TikTok if its parent company, ByteDance, can t find a U.S.-based buyer to sell it to. The law was prompted by long standing concerns about Chinese links to ByteDance, the potential misuse of U.S. user data and concern it could become a platform of Chinese propaganda.

**Crucial Quote**

Avoiding the platform entirely or exclusively focusing on the potential for Beijing-approved messaging to reach audiences distracts from the reality that TikTok is a contested information space, much like any other social media platform, report author Valerie Wirtschafter wrote. She argued that overlooking Russia s increased presence on the platform allows these narratives to circulate widely and without pushback.

**Further Reading**

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